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EH, NOT THAT COLD...

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PHOTO THE NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT TEAM AFTER PLUNGING BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

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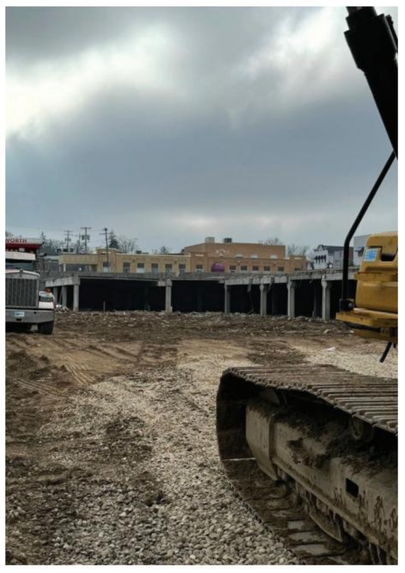
Demolition began last week on the uncompleted parking garage on the Whittaker Street property



Demolition has begun on the uncompleted parking garage on the Whittaker property

The unfinished parking garage began to be demolished on the Whittaker property

Demolition of abandoned development in downtown begins

BY STAN MADDUX

What's been referred for a long time as "the big hole in the ground" in downtown New Buffalo could be on the verge of being put back to use.

Demolition has been happening on the uncompleted parking garage that was once part of a retail/condominium development planned on Whittaker Street.

New Buffalo Mayor John Humphrey said the work occurring on the property long viewed as a detriment to downtown is a positive.

"It's progress, right. Something is happening," he said.

Originally, plans for the site approved in 2006 called for retail and condominiums inside multi-story buildings to be constructed above an underground parking garage with room for more than 100 vehicles.

The project stopped when the developer ran out of money to finish the project during a major nationwide economic downturn in 2008.

The roughly 1.5 acre site has been abandoned ever since until work began in late January on removing the unpaved concrete parking structure.

Humphrey said the demolition seems to be about halfway finished already.

"If it took them a week and a half to get there, I guess another week and a half to get it wrapped up," he said.

The site is presently owned by Victor Ciardelli, president and CEO of Guaranteed Rate, a retail mortgage company he founded in Chicago.

Currently, the property is up for sale.

It's listed at about $6 million.

New Buffalo City Manager Darwin Watson said he and other city officials met with representatives of Ciardelli last year and believes the purpose of the demolition is to make the property more attractive on the market.

He said a permit for the demolition was issued by the city late in 2023.

Watson said a $6 million purchase would likely mean a significant development having to go up on the site, eventually, to generate enough funds for the buyer to see a return on the investment.

He would like to see something similar to what was planned previously on the land once home to a few small shops.

Humphrey's vision for the site is smaller shops possibly with apartments and green space.

He also likes the idea of a restaurant and bar going there to add to the ones that have gone up recently in the downtown.

Watson also said he doesn't feel downtown has been hurt from what's also been referred to as "an eyesore."

"There's still an enormous amount of tourists that come and people that come to visit the city even when that's there," he said.

The "wicked" first appearances deceives many. — *Dino N. Fatouros*

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO
JOHN HUMPHREY, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJESKI, JOHN HUMPHREY, BRIAN FLANAGAN, VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
PETE RAHM, MICHELLE HEIT, JUDY H. ZABICKI, PATTY IAZZETTO, JACK ROGERS
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, BRADLEY BURNER, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, BILL MARSKE
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM

VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday October thru March at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER BLAKE O'HALLORAN, JAMES BRACEWELL, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES

MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

Retired officer named police chief in La Porte

BY STAN MADDUX

A former law enforcement officer has come out of retirement to take over as police chief in La Porte.

Dick Buell said his top priority is continuing the aggressive fight against drug dealers since Tom Dermody became mayor slightly more than four years ago.

"We're going to do everything we can to run them out," he said.

He said reducing drug activity is key to lowering the amount of other crimes like burglary, theft and robbery along with violence in general.

"If we can conquer the drug problem, we're in a much better situation," he said.

Buell took over the reins Monday after sworn into office by Dermody at La Porte City Hall.

He doesn't plan to make sweeping changes right away, saying any difference in direction will not be decided until after a thorough evaluation.

Buell, a former high school football standout in Michigan City, said he plans to bring to the department the same team, grind it out approach he learned from the game he went on to play in college.

"You're no better than the least experienced individual on that team. Buckle down, get the job done and go from there," he said.

He replaces Paul Brettin, who decided to retire after a 30 year law enforcement career spent entirely in La Porte.

Under Brettin the past four-years, the once short on manpower department is back to full strength with a newly created team of officers strictly targeting drug dealers.

Other accomplishments cited by Brettin included adding the latest in crime fighting technology such as drones, license plate reading cameras and wireless parking enforcement.

Dermody said there were five finalists for the position but Buell was "hands down" the right choice.

"I knew we had to find someone capable of carrying the momentum. Someone with the proper experience who cares about our community and would bring the same no-nonsense approach when it comes to protecting our residents," Dermody said.

Buell spent his first six years in law enforcement with the La Porte Police Department.

He then spent 20 years with the La Porte County Sheriff's Office where he was jail commander prior to becoming executive director of La Porte County Community Corrections.

Buell retired in 2019.

After the announcement, Buell said he wasn't thinking about coming out of retirement until the opportunity for a new challenge presented itself.

"For whatever reason, this peaked my interest and, in speaking with the mayor and other individuals, I figured I'm going to give this a shot," he said.

Buell said he expects to hit the ground running in many ways but will have to brush up on the latest in crime fighting technology.

"I've got to get up to speed on that but the crux of it is law enforcement is fundamental and that never changes. I'm ready to go," he said.

Matthew Drangmeister, a 16 year veteran of the department, was named assistant chief.

He replaces Bill Degnegaard, who retired in late January.

Brettin will stay with the department until the end of May to help with the transition.

Rich people march on Washington every day.
— I.F. Stone

DOCUMENTARY OF FRIENDS OF NEW TROY TO BE SCREENED THIS MONTH

Over the past year, local documentarians, Long Haul Productions, pieced together the history of Friends of New Troy.

The nonprofit organization was founded in 2006 by dedicated citizens committed to purchasing their school, the New Troy Elementary Campus, back from the River Valley School District and turning it into the centerpiece of Weesaw Township. Through negotiations, pivots, setbacks, and innovative management, Friends of New Troy succeeded in their goals and became integral partners in creating Weesaw Township Park and the owners and operators of our area's only community center.

Hear the story from some of Friends of New Troy's founding members and current volunteers, as well as through a deep dive into the archives of the 'little community center that could,' at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, in the Meeting Room of Friends of New Troy Community Center for Gather & The Story of Friends of New Troy.

Light refreshments of fresh popcorn, bottled water and soft drinks will be served. This event is open to the public, and all are welcome at no charge—though donations are always appreciated.

Friends of New Troy Community Center is at 13372 California Road in New Troy, Michigan. — STAFF REPORTS

Woman found dead in submerged police vehicle she allegedly stole

BY STAN MADDUX

A woman was found deceased in a La Porte County Police vehicle she allegedly stole and drove into a water filled ditch while trying to elude officers.

Melissa Collins, 21, of Lafayette was pronounced dead after located in the submerged 2021 Ford Explorer, according to Indiana State Police.

ISP said cause and manner of death will be determined through an autopsy.

The chain of events leading up to the death began late Wednesday night on Feb. 2 when a Westville Police officer tried stopping her for undisclosed reasons in a vehicle on U.S. 421, according to La Porte County Police.

The attempted traffic stop triggered a high speed pursuit to U.S. 30 then westbound into Porter County.

La Porte County Police said the suspect before reaching Valparaiso began traveling back to La Porte County on U.S. 30 then headed southbound on U.S. 421 at Wanatah.

A decision was then made to terminate the pursuit in the interest of safety, police said.

Several minutes later, La Porte County Police said information was received about a crash along U.S 421 near County Road 1400 South.

After the crash, the investigation shows Collins was handcuffed and secured in the front passenger seat of the police vehicle assigned to Deputy David Grimberg, according to state police.

Grimberg walked away from his patrol vehicle to investigate the crash when Collins began manipulating her handcuffs.

Eventually, ISP said Collins managed to unbuckle her seat belt and drive off in the police vehicle, authorities said.

While in pursuit, officers lost sight of the stolen police vehicle but while searching the area discovered it submerged in a water filled ditch in the area of 2100 South and 875 West between Wanatah and LaCrosse, ISP said.

ISP said evidence at the scene indicated the police vehicle crashed after crossing a set of railroad tracks at an extremely high rate of speed.

La Porte County Police Capt. Derek Allen said state police was brought into the investigation to avoid any appearance of impropriety because of a sheriff's department vehicle being involved in the happenings.

He said why Collins was in the area and other specifics remained under investigation.

Resignation of EMS administrator follows no confidence letter

BY STAN MADDUX

The longtime La Porte County Emergency Medical Services administrator has resigned after employees went to the top with their concerns about his ability to further lead the department.

A letter of resignation from Andrew McGuire was accepted by the La Porte County Commissioners Wednesday, Feb. 7.

McGuire spent close to 10 years of his 26 years with EMS as the administrator.

No reason for the resignation was given because of it being a personnel matter.

"Just like any department, we deal with all issues and we just hope now that we have a new administration they continue to build on what they had because it's a great service with great people," said La Porte County government attorney Scott Pejic.

There was also no light shed on whether the resignation was requested.

"He decided to move on and we wish him all of the best," said La Porte County Commissioner Joe Haney.

His resignation came several weeks after a letter of no confidence in the leadership of McGuire was submitted to the commissioners.

The letter signed by many EMS employees did not outline specific concerns but matters were looked into and discussed between the commissioners and other stakeholders in several closed sessions.

EMS Capt. Jeff Koon said the no confidence letter was in response to things like processes not followed the way they should be, double standards and lack of accountability.

He said a primary concern was delayed access to mental health treatment for medics requesting help in coping with a traumatic situation.

Koon said the result of the declining leadership was low morale along with medics feeling unsafe or insecure.

He said a few years ago is when concerns began emerging.

"We started to see it as more of an issue over the last year. Hopefully, we can start moving forward and bring that morale back up," he said.

The commissioners named Eric Fenstermaker, who's been second in command at EMS for nearly 10-years, the new administrator.

"He'll definitely have an opportunity to lead and definitely an opportunity to make a difference to the employees," Koon said.

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Brandon Cummings discusses the HVAC systems with New Buffalo students Dre Becerra and Giovanni Sanchez-Perez

Robert Hughes stands in front of the Lubke house last week

Students attach the drywall at the Lubke house

SCHOLASTICS

Building Trades students dive into hands-on training at New Buffalo

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

It was more than 20 years ago when Brandon Cummings entered the Building Trades program at New Buffalo High School.

Three years ago, the company Cumming's been employed at for 19 years gave a student in the program a three-year HVAC apprenticeship.

"It's funny how things come full circle," Robert Hughes, the instructor for the Building Trades program, said.

Hughes has been the instructor since 2000, which is when Cummings, who attended River Valley High School, joined. He got into the trades in 2005, and joined BER (Bruce Edward Ringer) HVAC.

A journeyman HVAC service technician, Cummings was present the last week of January on Lubke Street across from the elementary school, where this year's class is constructing a house.

"I work with them for the furnace side of things - they get to see the house from start to finish," he said.

Cummings said BER has done a lot of work for New Buffalo Area Schools throughout the years and working with the students is their company's "giveback" to them.

"We're geared more toward commercial - we do a lot of school work, we do a lot for the school...With doing the Building Trades house, we're helping kids and working with students and trying to teach them and show them what we do and if it's something they're interested in they can see it," he said.

The Building Trades program has been at New Buffalo since the late 1990s.

This year, Hughes said they have about 20 students in the program. Besides New Buffalo, this year, students are from River Valley, Buchanan and Bridgman.

Students from other school districts stay pretty much the whole year, while New Buffalo students are brought in and out of the district's three trimesters.

"The ones that are really, really interested in doing construction, they'll probably be here all year because they're going to an apprenticeship or going to Ferris State University," Hughes said.

In Michigan, Cummings said Ferris is one of the lead schools for HVAC.

Students have constructed houses throughout New Buffalo - a remodel on Detroit Street, houses along Clay Street by the school as well as on Lubke Road and south of Lubke. Excluding a year during the Covid-19 pandemic, Hughes said that students have worked on one house a year since he's been the instructor there.

Last week, students were working on hanging the drywall on the current 1,800 square foot, single level house that's going in on Lubke. Hughes said that students see the whole process through: electrical, plumbing, drywalling, insulation, drywall finishing, painting, flooring and cabinets.

Currently, the house is projected to be completed by the end of the school year in May, although Hughes said that about four juniors will be there until early June.

The house is the first one that's part of the attainable housing project on the 47 acres of land on Lubke that are owned by New Buffalo Area Schools.

NBAS has been in talks with a potential developer with regards to the Planned Unit Development. Plans are to develop approximately 10 acres of the property, preserving the approximately 37 acres of wetlands and the existing trail system. Ten to 15 building sites for the Building Trades students will be retained to construct single family homes over the course of the next 10-15 years, with one house being constructed per year and sold upon completion.

"We want this one to be a nice one to represent what's going to go in the next 15 years," Hughes said.

Hughes hopes the program will address the shortage that currently exists of people in the trades. It's a career path that can be lucrative for those who choose to enter it.

"These kids can come out earning $45,000 to $65,000 - it's not unheard of if they're hard workers," he said.

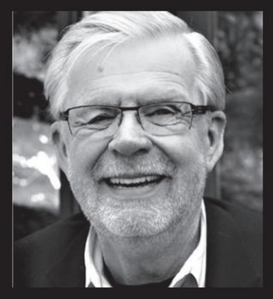
Due to the need for workers, companies like the one Cummings works for are recruiting students.

"These young people can get into the trade, they can get into an apprenticeship...These owners are willing to train them and actually push them through college because they're in need of young people coming into the trades," Hughes said.

"Twenty-four years ago, kids went out and just got jobs – (now) the owners are calling me to get the kids, there's that much of a shortage," he added.

SPORTS

From the Bleachers



COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

Zach Lavine of the Bulls underwent foot surgery and will miss the rest of the season. Connor Bedard of the Blackhawks has a broken jaw but will return soon. Spring training for the Cubs and Sox starts in a couple of weeks and the "Big game" doesn't get played until this weekend. Is that all there is in the sports world this week?

Lawyers, corporations, and greed have infiltrated sports at many levels, but one sport that has escaped, so far, is collegiate women's basketball. While many of us weren't paying much attention, young ladies were honing their skills and have transformed themselves into truly wonderful basketball players.

While many great players preceded her, Caitlin Clark, a guard from the University of Iowa, has captured the imagination of all basketball fans in a big way. This week Iowa played Northwestern in Evanston and the game sold out. Not only was the game a sellout, but tickets were in such high demand that they reached the secondary market and some tickets were actually on sale for a thousand dollars. When I heard about the price of tickets I was flabbergasted.

A thousand dollars to watch a girls college basketball game was inconceivable to me, but after reading about and watching Caitlin, I am beginning to understand why.

She is a terrific shooter and great all around player. Before the season ends, she will most likely become the highest scoring female player in history.

When the Covid virus hit, collegiate sports decided to grant an extra year of eligibility to all student athletes. Around the same time, courts ruled that collegiate athletes could earn money for their name, image, and likeness (NIL).

So, due to the fact that Women's professional basketball has yet to develop a large following which limits the amount of money players can earn, it's possible that Caitlin could stay in school an extra year and make more money than she would if she went professional. Whichever choice she makes, she's a winner, and will probably go down in history as the female version of Michael Jordan.

Another woman who is loosely connected to sports won her fourth album of the year Sunday night at the Grammys. Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce are getting a lot of reactions, both positive and negative, for their very public relationship.

No less an authority than David Letterman said to the haters "This is such a lovely thing. Shut up!" Cheers to you Mr. Letterman. Swift is scheduled to perform a concert in Tokyo, jump on a plane, and fly to Las Vegas to watch her man perform in the "Big Game" Sunday in Las Vegas. By Friday, she will be in Australia performing seven more concerts. Bless her heart. I hope they get married and live happily ever after.

Taylor Swift wrote and sang "'Cause the players gonna play / And the haters gonna hate / Baby I'm just gonna shake / I shake it off / I shake it off."

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

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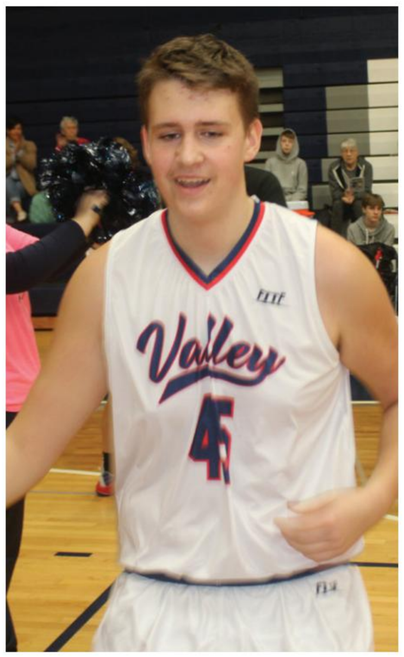


Bison stampede Mustangs in boys' basketball

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School boys' basketball team continues its winning ways.

The Bison defeated River Valley 58-31 on the road Saturday, Feb. 3, after beating Eau Claire 53-33 the previous night at home.

New Buffalo (9-7) has won eight of its last nine games.

At River Valley, the Bison led by just four points at halftime against the Mustangs, who were still looking for their first win of the season.

New Buffalo Head Coach Nate Tripp, obviously frustrated at his underperforming players, stormed into the locker room and then quickly came out and waited calmly on the bench for the start of the third quarter.

Tripp said he spoke only a few words to his players, choosing to let them decide for themselves if they really wanted to compete like they're capable of during the second half.

He felt the players coming in took the Mustangs for granted despite being told not to expect them to roll over.

"They just thought, River Valley. We'll be fine. Sure enough. River Valley came out and played us really hard," he said.

The momentum appeared to swing toward New Buffalo for good early in the third quarter when Sam Tripp nailed a three point shot to give the Bison a nine point lead.

However, the Mustangs stayed within striking distance until New Buffalo put together several quick scores with less than a minute to play in the period to open up a 15 point lead.

M'Nason Smothers off a pass laid the ball into the rim then Elliott Bourne off two quick steals dribbled in each time for lay-ups.

The game turned into blow out when New Buffalo scored the first 10 points of the fourth quarter.

The run was capped by center Lucas Forker intercepting a pass at half court and taking the ball in aggressively for a spectacular lay-up.

Forker led all scorers with 26 points.

James Shaw contributed 10 points for the Bison.

River Valley, offensively, was led by JaQuan Pierce and Enrique Merino, who had nine points apiece.

After winning just two games during a rebuilding year last season, the Bison with mostly returning players seemed headed toward another miserable season after losing six of their first seven games this season.

An offseason dedicated to young and inexperienced players learning the fundamentals of the game better and lifting weights is now bearing fruit.

Forker becoming dominant on offense and a defense more smothering on both ends of the court are also major contributors to the turn around.

"We're on a roll. I'm happy for the guys. They're playing hard. They're working hard, getting better. We're heading in the right direction," he said.

Mustangs too much for Bison in girls' basketball

BY STAN MADDUX

A three game winning streak by the New Buffalo High School girls' basketball team came to a screeching halt at the hands of River Valley.

The Lady Mustangs defeated the Lady Bison 49-25 at home on Saturday, Feb. 3.

From the beginning, the ability of the Lady Mustangs to shoot and execute in other areas of the game proved too much for New Buffalo.

River Valley (4-7) jumped out to a 12-0 lead by making shots from all distances, including two from beyond the three point mark from seniors Kursten Smith and Natalyn Heckathorn.

The first bucket for the Lady Bison didn't come until freshman Laney Strother nailed a three point shot with just over a minute left to play in the first quarter.

New Buffalo (3-6) scored first in the second quarter when Addy Lamport sank a 10 foot shot despite a defender's outstretched hand in her face to bring the Lady Bison to within six points.

The Mustangs, though, went on a 12 point run with help from Heckathorn, who converted a steal into a lay-up then quickly nailed a three point shot.

The next score from the Lady Bison didn't come until just before halftime when Strother drilled a shot from well beyond the three point line.

The only bucket in the third quarter for New Buffalo came from a short baseline shot by freshman Harper Bowman.

New Buffalo outscored the Lady Mustangs by six points in the fourth quarter with help from a short turn around bank shot from Lamport and lay-up by freshman Adamary Cardenas, who took the ball in from a steal at half court.

Heckathorn led River Valley with 15 points followed by Shyann Spaulding with 10 points.

Strother and Lamport each had six points for New Buffalo.

The Lady Bison defeated Eau Claire 21-20 at home the previous night.

"We scored just enough points to hang in and pull out the win," said New Buffalo Head Coach Rich Knoll.

Their other consecutive wins came against Grace Christian and Countryside Academy.

Despite the team's improvement, Knoll said he knew the game against River Valley was going to be extremely tough because of their level of talent.

"They're good. We knew coming in we would have our hands full," he said.

The locker room embraces the guy that is about the team, and is serious about winning.
— Jim Harbaugh

Taking the plunge for a cause at Southwest Michigan Polar Plunge 2024

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

This year, Audrey Proctor took the plunge not once, but twice, for Special Olympics Michigan.

Proctor, who's the 2024 Miss New Buffalo, plunged into the icy waters of the Plungester at Watermark Brewing Company in Stevensville at the Southwest Michigan Polar Plunge Saturday, Feb. 3, with her fellow court members as well as members of the New Buffalo Township Fire Department team.

"I didn't think I was going to be able to do it the second time - I was shaking a lot - but I'm glad I did it," Proctor, who jumped first with the fire department before diving in with the royal court's fairy-tale themed team, said.

She was accompanied by Mr. New Buffalo Cameron Forker, Miss New Buffalo First Runner-up Kaitlyn Rainwater, Miss New Buffalo Second Runner-up Laura Wamser, Mr. New Buffalo First Runner-up Braiden Brooks and Nick Messinger

Rainwater said she was cold but it was "so worth it," with Forker saying it was colder than an ice bath.

"I'm glad I did it, it was fun," he said.

Messinger said he didn't hesitate when it was his turn to take the plunge.

"I dove right into that cold water - I did a belly flop," he said.

According to its website, the Polar Plunge is the biggest fundraiser for Special Olympics Michigan.

The plunge is presented by the Law Enforcement Torch Run, a movement of volunteers dedicated to increasing awareness and funds for Special Olympics Michigan athletes across the state.

All funds raised by Plungers help Special Olympics Michigan provide year-round training and services to over 23,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities across the state.

According to the Watermark Brewing's Facebook, this year's plunge raised over $120,000, surpassing the $100,000 goal. This year, there were 370 plungers.

As of earlier this week, the Gilligan's Island-themed Berrien County Sheriff's Office team had raised $13,081.

"So it's a friendly competition for a great cause," Chuck Heit, Berrien County sheriff, said.

Sgt. Michael Troup, the county's homeland security specialist, noted that day's balmy temperature proved to be ideal plunging weather.

"We got a lot of first time jumpers and you couldn't ask for a better day - the weather's perfect, the water's a little cold but we'll survive," he said.

The New Buffalo Police Department team had raised a little over $1,300, but more donations were coming the day of the plunge.

Meg Killips, who was jumping as part of the New Buffalo City Police Department team, said that the plunge is a team effort.

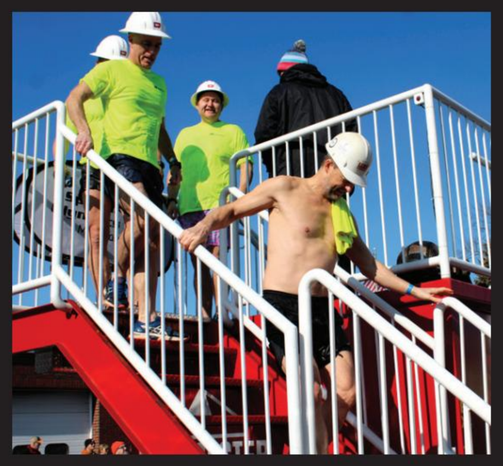
"I think all the police departments come together as brothers and sisters and just do everything together to raise money for this wonderful cause for the Special Olympics - it touches my heart and it touches many," she said.

She jumps for all the families that are involved in the Special Olympics as well as for her daughter, Katie, who passed away years ago.

"If she would've made it through, we were hoping she could possibly be involved with the Special Olympics so whenever I jump in, I always say, 'I love you, Katie, Mommy's here,'" she said.

This year, Special Olympics Michigan planned to host more than 25 Polar Plunges, with the goal of raising more than $1.5 million. The funds raised will allow SOMI athletes to travel and compete in day-long sports competition throughout the year at no cost to them. More information can be found at www.somi.org.

Members of the Berrien County Sheriff's Office team take the plunge



Walking down the Plungester after taking the plunge

Brian Poynter, Meg Killips, Courtney Severn and Melissa Flick make up the New Buffalo Police Department team

A hippie-themed team takes the plunge

Preparing to take the plunge into the Plungester

The Miss and Mr. New Buffalo team prepares for the plunge

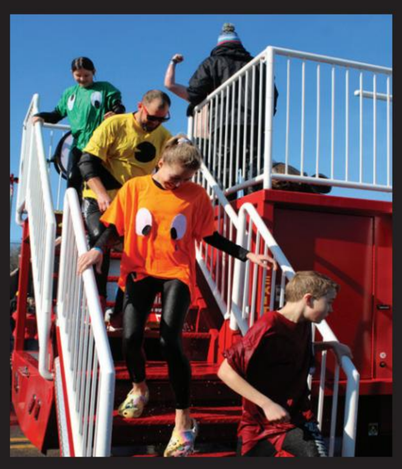
The Grinch prepares to take the plunge

Costumed characters took the plunge

A pair of plungers dive into the Plungester

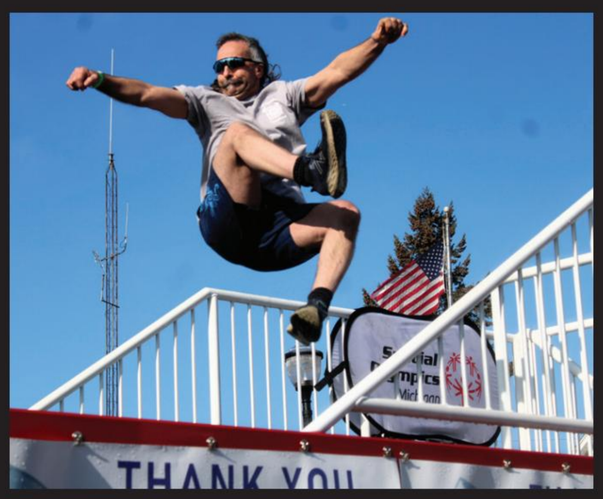
Plungers make a splash into the Plungester

Plungers pose after making the plunge



Descending the steps of the Plungester

Members of the Berrien County Sheriff's Office Gilligan's Island-themed team in front of the Plungester

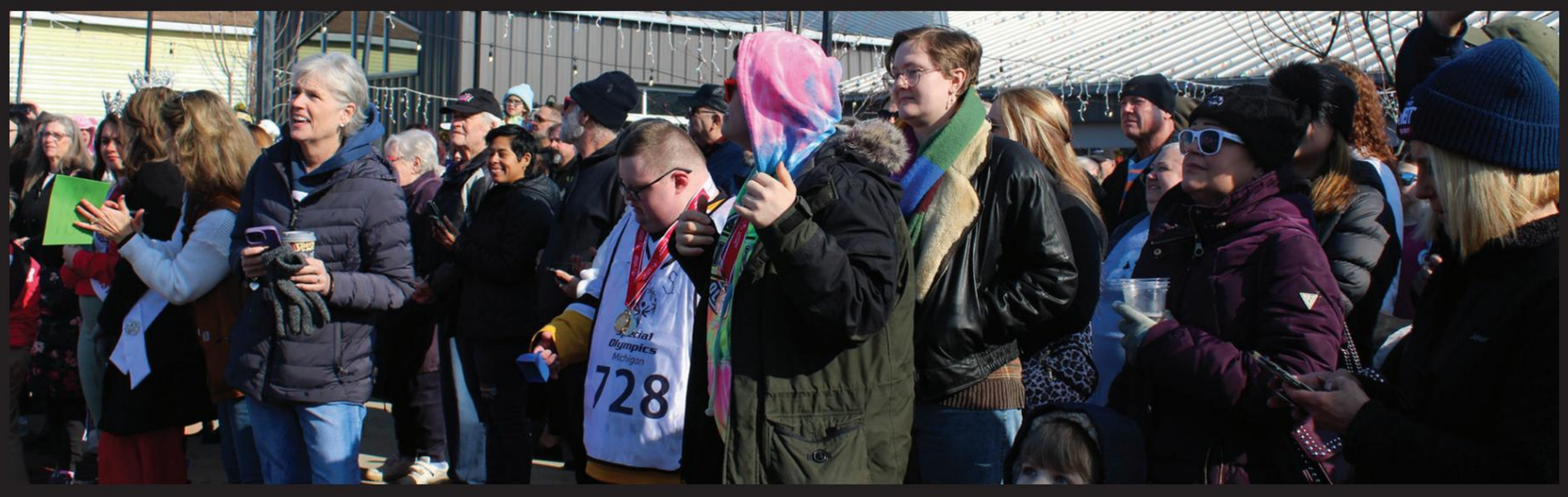


Plungers dove into the Plungester

Members of a bachelorette party prepare for the plunge

Courtney Severn and Melissa Flick from the New Buffalo Police Department take the plunge

Miss New Buffalo 2024 Audrey Proctor makes the plunge



The crowd cheers for the plungers

The Skipper takes the plunge for the sheriff's office

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Empty Bowls dinner on tap for end of the month

The 12th annual Empty Bowls dinner will take place from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27, at the New Buffalo Middle/High School Cafeteria at 1112 E. Clay Street in New Buffalo.

Proceeds from the dinner will support the Blessings in a Backpack program founded by Water's Edge Church, which benefits the elementary school. Every Thursday, members pack bags of food for students in need so students don't go hungry over the weekend.

For a suggested donation of $10, guests can enjoy a soup dinner prepared by the Foods and Nutrition class and take home a bowl. This is a first come, first serve basis, so soup and bowls will be available until sold out. None of the bowls will be set aside on reserve for this event.

Empty Bowls will be hosted by the New Buffalo High School Student Senate, along with Renee Bowen's Foods and Nutrition class and Ashley Jager's Pottery Club/Community Pottery Workshop members/sixth grade artists. Jager and the NBHS Pottery Club, Community Pottery Workshop, and sixth grade artists, have created and donated the ceramic bowls.

— STAFF REPORTS

New Buffalo Times
LOCAL INTELLIGENCE
— SINCE 1942 —

League of Women Voters to highlight Neighbor by Neighbor

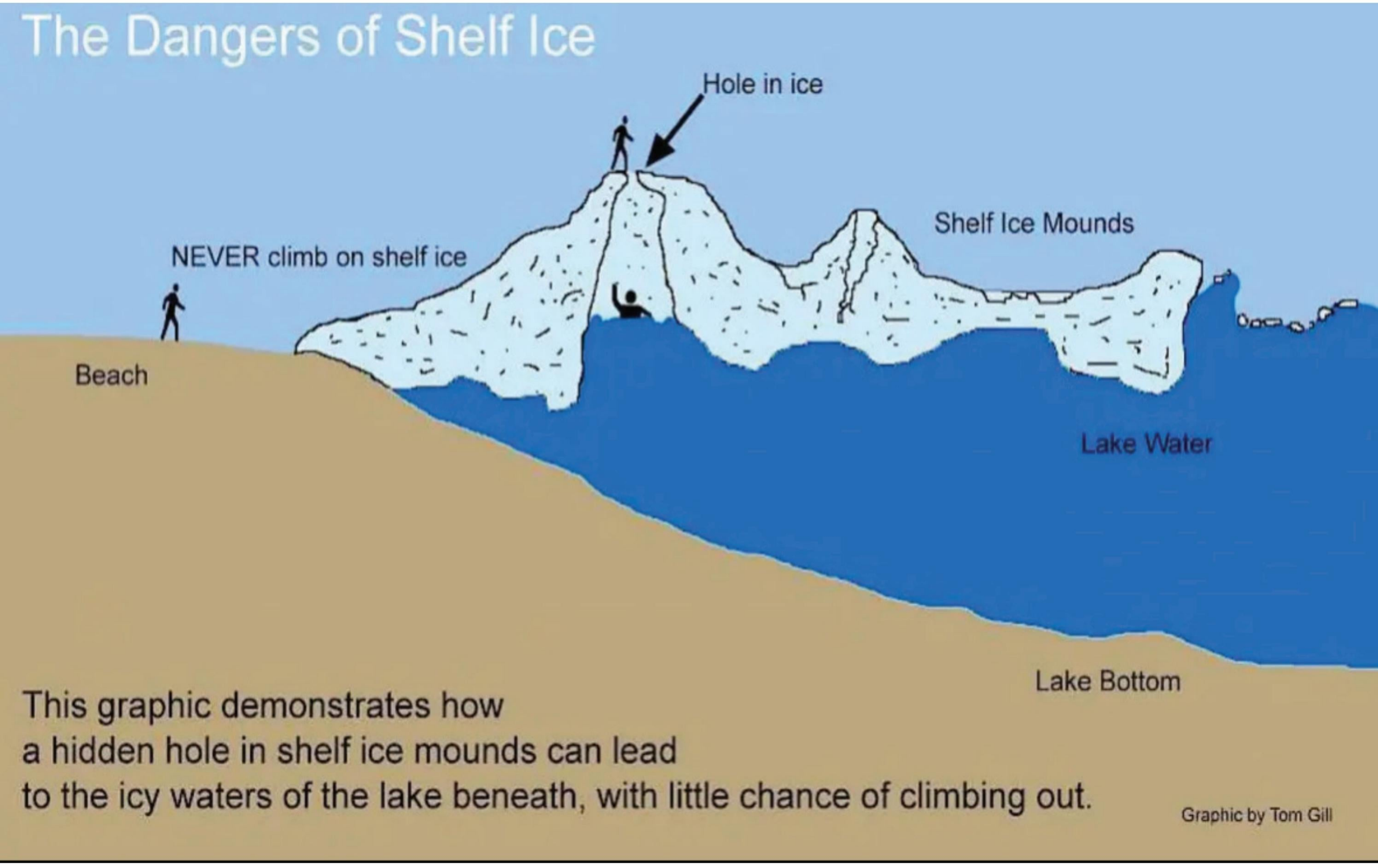
The League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties has announced it will host Feb. 20 an overview of the popular "Neighbor by Neighbor" program and discuss how it can help economically disadvantaged Berrien and Cass County residents at noon Tuesday, Feb. 20, at Papa Vino's Italian Kitchen, located at 1332 Hilltop Road in St. Joseph, Michigan..

Keri Haskins, executive director of Neighbor by Neighbor, will present an overview of the organization and how it helps economically disadvantaged Berrien County residents.

Haskins has a bachelor's degree in communications from Miami University and a master's degree in counseling from Andrews University, where she is an adjunct professor of counseling and psychology. Haskins has worked as a school counselor for 12 years and brings mentoring, communication, leadership and organizational skills to Neighbor by Neighbor. In her free time, she enjoys collecting beach glass, reading, camping, traveling, and game nights with her family.

This specially arranged luncheon meeting will be sponsored by the League. A special menu with luncheon items will be available for purchase by attendees. Those who are interested in attending should contact jraymond42@frontier.com (269-208-4043) or fschoon@mac.com (707-439-4433) to RSVP.

For more information, contact Faith Schoon, president of the League of Women Voters of Berrien, and Cass Counties, at 708-439-4433. — STAFF REPORTS


The Dangers of Shelf Ice
Hole in ice
Shelf Ice Mounds
NEVER climb on shelf ice
Beach
Lake Water
Lake Bottom
This graphic demonstrates how
a hidden hole in shelf ice mounds can lead
to the icy waters of the lake beneath, with little chance of climbing out.
Graphic by Tom Gill

OBITUARIES

Thomas Andrew Shortlidge

1943-2024

Tom Shortlidge, passed away on January 30th, 2024, at home in Lakeside, MI surrounded by his loving family after a year-long battle with cancer.

Tom is survived by his wife Carole Shortlidge, daughter Chelsea (Tony Comer) Shortlidge, son Adam (Irene) Shortlidge, stepdaughter Laura (Bob) Kimball, brother Neil (Renee) Shortlidge, and grandchildren Chase Comer, Emma and Dylan Shortlidge, and Jack and Will Kimball. Tom was always a devoted husband and proud father and grandfather who will be sorely missed.

Tom was born in 1943 in Fort Pierce, FL, to Frazer and Olga Shortlidge. He studied Graphic Design at Kansas University where he was the Art Director of the senior Yearbook and graduated with distinction in 1966.

Tom described himself as a "chameleon of sorts." On any given day, he could be a writer, designer, painter, or creative director. Tom began his 33 years in advertising at Young & Rubicam Chicago, worked at N.W. Ayer Chicago, and Hackenberg, Normann & Partners, then returned to Young & Rubicam, rising to Executive Vice-President and Executive Creative Director. Tom was responsible for every imaginable kind of product from beer to bologna, contact lenses to hotels. His clients included Adidas, Allied Van Lines, G. Heileman Brewing, Miller Brewing, Pabst Brewing, John Deere, WLS-TV, Wesley-Jessen, the Nature Conservancy, and Sears where he created "The Softer Side of Sears" campaign, re-invigorating the Sears brand. His work received countless advertising and design awards, including several Clios, the Oscars of the advertising community, and he was named to numerous creative "All Star" lists.

Tom's most widely recognized work is likely the image he helped craft for Crate and Barrel. As a young man, he went to work in the first Crate and Barrel store, and began a decades-long collaboration with the company's founders Gordon and Carole Segal. During that time, Tom created the famous Crate and Barrel logo and distinctive packaging still in use today, as well as beautifully conceived catalogs and advertising. His work for Crate and Barrel is included in the permanent design collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

In retirement, Tom brought an all-encompassing, passionate intensity to each of his endeavors: reading, photography, painting, golf, international travel, the design of his home in Lakeside, MI and his home and art studio in Tucson, AZ. Tom started seeing paintings in his dreams. He enrolled in the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, taking classes and briefly served on its advisory board while pursuing an active career as an artist. Tom poured himself into drafting a book celebrating the 100th anniversary of Chikaming Country Club where Tom was a member and board officer. He loved writing and never took the task lightly, sometimes taking hours to compose the perfect email to a friend. Tom read profusely covering a wide range of subjects from the histories of great leaders and visionaries, architecture, jazz, and political thought. To each of these endeavors, Tom brought care, respect and his exacting eye for beauty.

Above all, Tom will be remembered as a loving husband and true partner to Carole, proud father, grandfather and friend to so many. We will forever miss his sly humor, quick wit, searching intellect, and the twinkle in his eye.

A memorial will be held in Lakeside, MI at a date to be announced.

Michigan Chamber welcomes two Southwest Michigan business leaders to board of directors

Michigan Chamber of Commerce members have elected Eleanor Reece, Whirlpool Corporation's vice president of global communications, and Arthur Havlicek, president and CEO of the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber of Commerce, to the business organization's 2024-25 board of directors.

Both Reece and Havlicek officially joined the board last week.

Michigan Chamber President & CEO Jim Holcomb welcomed Reece and Havlicek to the roles, saying volunteer leaders like these two are the lifeblood of the Michigan Chamber and fulfilling the organization's mission to build a stronger Michigan for all and work to protect, connect and strengthen employers across the Great Lakes State.

"The Michigan Chamber and our state's businesses, communities and families will be served well with the expertise and perspectives of Eleanor and Arthur," said Jim Holcomb, Michigan Chamber president and CEO. "Their commitment to innovation, pragmatic problem solving and civility, and ensuring our state's economic competitiveness will be a great guide for the Chamber's work in 2024."

Eleanor Reece

Arthur Havlicek

Reece has been with Whirlpool since 2019, first as senior director of global communications, after serving across various communications and government relations roles in the private sector, including with General Motors, CNN International and consulting for other industries. She holds her bachelor's degree in international affairs from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Havlicek has been at the helm of the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber for four years. Before that, he served in multiple policy and outreach roles in the Michigan House of Representatives and has been recognized with numerous awards. He holds his bachelor's degree in political science and public administration from Grand Valley State University.

— STAFF REPORTS

HOROSCOPE

FEBRUARY 8-14, 2024

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

There is an intense energy flowing in now and it will be easy to resort to vindictive and malicious behaviors. Pay attention to your motivations and deal with jealousy or resentments privately. Rather than being spiteful when you feel put down, take time to reflect and detach.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

There is a heavy energy settling in this week and it will be landing in your responsibility zone. This is the time to honor your strengths and follow through with large projects that have been looming. Friends will be a huge source of help now. Order the pizza and the painting will begin.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

Get your traveling gear ready, as you will be feeling very restless and in need of following new endeavors. This is the time to venture out on your own, make your own way and find comfort in yourself. Get inside your head and uncover any shadow work that needs addressed.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

Commitments and responsibilities will be heavy this week and you may need to rearrange your social schedule to meet deadlines. Pulling resources and working with your partner is important. Working together will advance projects and decrease your work load. Be that solid team.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

Interactions with partners and close associates could get intense this week. Deal with any competitiveness that you may be experiencing before talking or interacting in ways that may damage the relationship. Control impulses and become more aware of your motivations.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

Be very careful on the jobsite this week. Things may feel rushed but that doesn't mean you have to cut corners. Stay true to procedures and avoid complacency. Your productivity will increase greatly when you separate socializing and phone time from work and responsibility time.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

Your intuition and timing will be on point this week. You will be in a good position to get the ball rolling so, don't be afraid to get to the point with coworkers and teammates. Get the problems that have an element of taboo or not so nice to talk about subjects out in the open and they will be handled.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

Attend to issues and responsibilities at home and with the important females in your life. Take time to create solid foundations that promote safety and the ability to be vulnerable. Nurture those relationships that may have been overlooked or taken for granted; especially your own feminine side.

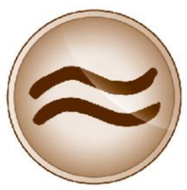
SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

Warning conversations and interactions with others could get really heated and off topic. Understand that there may be some underlying emotional or control issues at work here. Before reacting to what is being said, try to look deeper and see if there is something else driving the interaction.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

It's important you stay on topic and true to form this week, as impulsive vibes are circulating. It will be easy to be led astray from the real issue or problem. The more you limit outside influences, whether social media or actual substances, the heart of the issue will present itself for resolution.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



There will be a lot shifting on the home-front, as the winds of change are blowing in your direction now. This is your opportunity to put an end to stagnating partnerships. It's important to root yourself in your convictions and stay true to your beliefs, when faced with unexpected changes.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

Retreating and reflecting will be important actions this week, as new information emerges. Rather than reacting, practice silence. Give yourself that space needed to see both sides of an issue before, getting involved in discussions. Avoid signing or committing until, all test results are available.

Much effort, much prosperity.
— Euripides

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

	6	8						
4				1			5	
2					9		6	7
			9				7	1
	2	5					9	6
	9		7		2			
	1				7	8		
6					8			
	8						4	9

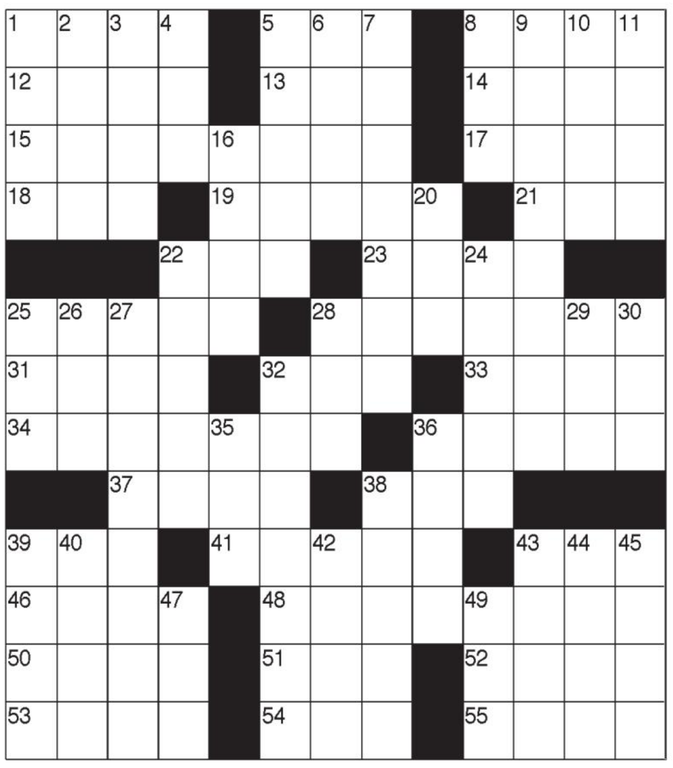
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Two-horse chariot
5 Accomplished
8 Brow of a hill (Scot.)
12 Norse giant
13 Adopted son of Mohammed
14 Consort of Siva
15 Got
17 Ship of the Argonauts
18 Spelling contest
19 Corset
21 Mulberry of India
22 Exclamation
23 Stone hammer
25 Heb. teacher
28 Brief
31 Monitor lizard
32 His (Fr.)
33 Range
34 Wine
36 Rom. author
37 "Dies ____"
38 Allow
39 Corporal (abbr.)
41 Refute
43 Afr. worm
46 Hole
48 Ram (2 words)
50 Russ. range
51 Yale student
52 Cubitus
53 Ten (pref.)
54 Bosh
55 Keg

DOWN

1 Bring your own bottle (abbr.)
2 Cordage fiber
3 Lodging place (Fr.)
4 Military macaw
5 S.A. tapir
6 Lower intestine
7 One of the Apostles
8 Jamaican dance music
9 4th incarnation of Vishnu
10 Sea lettuce
11 Biology (abbr.)
16 Yahi tribe survivor
20 "Casablanca" character
22 Saul's army leader
24 Blue color
25 Liquor
26 Orinoco tributary
27 Myth. lizard
28 Grasp
29 Kidney (pref.)
30 About so
32 Secret agent
35 Science class
36 Look narrowly
38 Lawful
39 Dressed
40 Wan
42 New sugarcane shoot
43 "Cavallera Rusticana" heroine
44 Possesses
45 Biblical giants
47 Inlet
49 Duke (Fr.)



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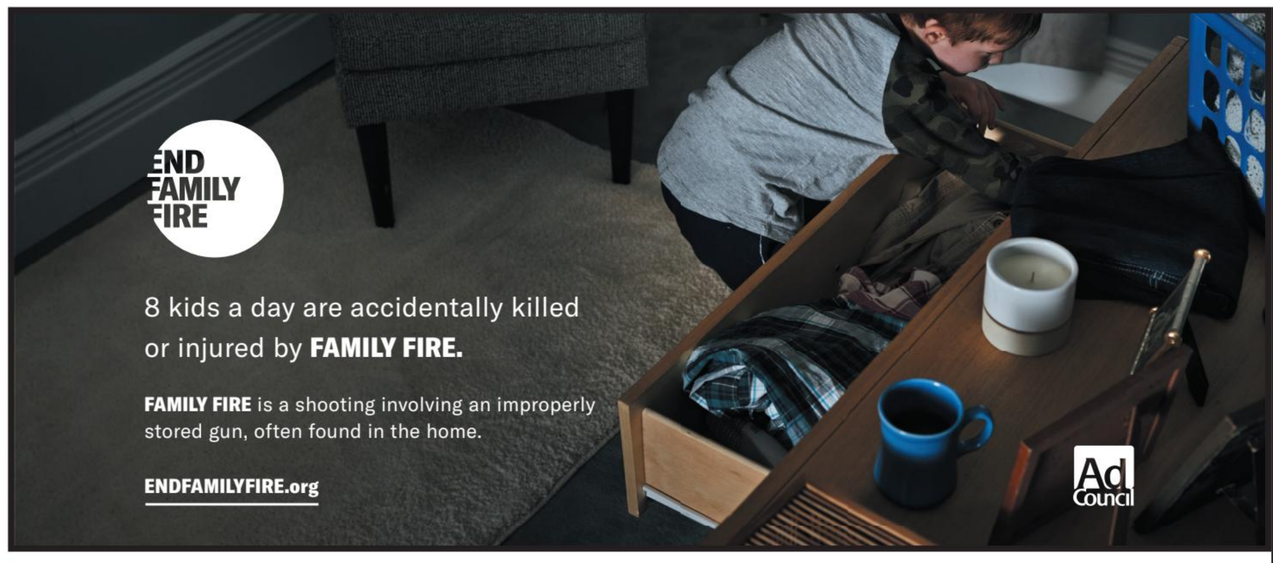
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NO BULLYING SCHOOLS

NO BULLYING SCHOOLS PRESENTATION

- ***Where: New Buffalo Middle/High School Cafeteria***
- ***When: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m. Following the NBAS Empty Bowls event.***
- ***Tom Thelen (more info below)***

WHO IS TOM THELEN??

- ***Speaker at 800+ schools since 2012***
- ***Lead Author of Mental Health 101***
- ***Founder of Nonprofit, Reset Schools***
- ***Certified Trainer in "Mental Health First Aid," a program from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing***
- ***Lives in Cocoa, Florida, with his wife Casie, four kids, and a dog.***

Tom Thelen is one of America's top motivational speakers on the topics of mental health and bullying prevention. His new book, Mental Health 101 for Teens, is an Amazon #1 Release.

Tom has spoken at over 800 schools and conferences and has been interviewed on NBC, CBS, FOX, and PBS. Tom is a Certified Instructor in Youth Mental Health First Aid, a training program by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

As the founder of the nonprofit RESETSCHOOLS.ORG Tom and his team created the award-winning Mental Health 101 Book and Curriculum, a program that teaches students positive skills like respect, responsibility, and resiliency, as well as coping skills for stress and anxiety.

Tom is the founder of NOBULLYINGSCHOOLS.COM an evidence-based bullying prevention program with a smartphone app and video lessons on the topics of bullying, mental health, social skills, and resiliency.

Tom graduated from Grace University with a Bachelor of Science degree and went on to write three books for students including Teen Leadership Revolution, Victimproof, and Mental Health 101 for Teens.

9	6	8	5	7	3	1	2	4
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8	3	6	9	5	4	2	7	1
7	2	5	8	3	1	4	9	6
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5	1	9	6	4	7	8	3	2
6	4	2	3	9	8	7	1	5
3	8	7	1	2	5	6	4	9

B	I	G	A	■	D	I	D	■	S	N	A	B
Y	M	I	R	■	A	L	I	■	K	A	L	I
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Owner Ryan Ziarko with one of his brews outside Seedz Brewery

Owner Ryan Ziarko pours a brew inside Seedz Brewery

Seedz Brewery garners USA Today's nomination for one of best new breweries

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Locals and visitors to the area have until the end of the month to cast a vote for Seedz Brewery in Union Pier, which has been nominated as one of the best new breweries for USA Today.

Recently, a panel of beer experts has nominated their top picks of breweries that have opened in the past three years (since the beginning of 2021) for USA Today 10Best's 2024 Reader's Choice Awards.

Readers can vote once per day at www.10best.usatoday.com/awards/travel/best-new-brewery-2024/ until noon Feb. 26. The top 10 winners,which will be determined by the votes, will be announced March 2.

Seedz Brewery was one of the 16 nominees, which are located in cities such as Chicago and Seattle, Washington.

"It's kind of cool to get some recognition from being in a small little town for what we're doing - there are so many great places we have in this area, it's pretty cool to be up there with some of these great breweries that are in bigger, major cities that get more global recognition than what we would," Ryan Ziarko, owner of Seedz Brewery, said.

One of the beer experts, Alexie Dickie of the "Adventures and Ales" blog, has visited 1,275 breweries in 36 states and 34 countries.

Some of the experts, Ziarko said, have been to Seedz.

"I actually follow their blogs, so they've talked about us before on their blogs," he said.

A resident of New Buffalo and 2013 New Buffalo High School graduate, Ziarko said he attended college at Xavier University in Chicago before returning to the area.

"I always had a thought of either opening a restaurant or brewery and then I thought, 'What a better place than moving back home because we live in such a great area,'" he said.

It's "great," Ziarko said, because Michigan is replete with the best agriculture in the nation.

"That was one of the reasons that I wanted to move here: so I can use all the local agriculture - and so far, it's been working out for the last three years," he said.

The name "Seedz" was derived from the life cycle of local agriculture - from when the fruit and grain start growing to when everything blossoms.

The process of perfecting the brews could be a "very long, slow, natural process." Some of the brews take two to three months to age.

"We like to use a terroir - the air, environment and soil - and to just let the ingredients shine," Ziarko said.

The small-batched brewery uses locally sourced ingredients within the Midwest region, which includes using 100 percent local grain from Empire Malting in Empire, Michigan, Sugar Creek Malting Company in Lebanon, Indiana, and Granor Farm in Union Pier. Their hops are grown by Howe Farms in Crown Point, Indiana, and Hop Head Farms in Baroda.

Beer is inspired by the Belgian and German styles. Seedz's flagship beer, Ziarko said, Mitten Life, an American Lager that's 100 percent ingredient sourced from Michigan. Hell's Hopper is a German Helles-style lager named after his dog, Hopper. Two brews that have been gaining a following have been Tmave Seedz, a dark Czech lager and Das Urteil (12 Plato Czech Lager). The base malt for both of the beers is Edelweiss, which comes from Sugar Creek Malting Company. An ancient heirloom barley, this Hana Barley hasn't been grown in the United States since World War II.

While they haven't ventured into wine territory, Seedz crafts mixed fermentation saisons. There's Blueberry Jams, a blueberry saison; Fuzzy Knights, a peach saison and, for their third anniversary Feb. 10, Rosy Beets, a beet saison with rosemary that has ingredients from Granor Farm.

"We put them all in a larger format, like wine bottles, so it makes you feel it's like wine - a little more romantic - and they're very fruity," Ziarko said.

No matter what he's crafting, Ziarko said sourcing the freshest ingredients is key.

"Some of the best pizza is the Neapolitan pizza, where it's just beautiful fresh sauce,a little cheese and basil, with a great crust in the wood fire....That's what I'm like with our beer, just get the best ingredients, the freshest ingredients possible, and it'll showcase the beer itself," Ziarko said.

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